



Wendell Tjon

March 21, 1917 - February 13, 2012

Wendell Norman Tjon was born March 21, 1917 to Torstein and Odel (Larson) Tjon on the family farmstead near Bottineau, ND. He graduated from Bottineau High School in 1935 and North Dakota School of Forestry, Bottineau, ND in 1937. Wendell continued his education at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN graduating in 1939 with a degree in Education. In 1966 he earned his Masters Degree in Music Education from MacPhail Music Center, Minneapolis, MN. He first taught music in Reville, SD On June 4, 1941 he was united in marriage to Marjorie Krueger at Huron, SD. He continued teaching music in Willow River and Sherburn, MN before moving to Valley City, ND in 1944. He assumed directorship of vocal and instrumental music in the Valley City Public Schools system. Because of the growth of the school and music department, he gave up the vocal music in 1958, but continued with instrumental music until his retirement in 1979.

Wendell was a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Valley City and directed the Senior Church Choir for many years. He was a member of the North Dakota Education Association, the National Education Association, Music Educators National Conference and the Lutheran Brotherhood.

Wendell's love of gardening for many decades produced abundant harvests of fruits and vegetables for family, friends and neighbors. His raspberry patch was especially popular with his grandchildren.

He also had a great interest in history and current events, always keeping up with the news of the world. And, of course, music was his greatest passion in life. Over his forty years of service in several public school systems he taught thousands of students to play musical instruments of all kinds. Many of his pupils themselves went on to pursue satisfying careers in music.

Wendell died at Bethany Homes in Fargo, ND on February 13, 2012. He is survived by a brother, Lowell Tjon, Lisbon, ND; sister-in-law, Evelyn (Norman) Tjon, Huntington Station, NY; two sons: Curtis (Mavis) Tjon, Fargo, ND and Douglas L. Tjon, West Fargo, ND; a daughter, Carolyn (Michael) Burnstein, Ann Arbor, MI. He is also survived by five grandchildren: Christopher (Kelly) Tjon, Phoenix, AZ; Stacey (Tom) Bossart, Fargo, ND; Jeremy (Tracy) Tjon, Moorhead, MN; Eric Burnstein, Ann Arbor, MI and Leah Burnstein, Austin, TX. Wendell has six surviving great-children, James Tjon, Phoenix, AZ; Owen, Briggs and Gage Tjon, Moorhead, MN; Gunnar and Gabby Bossart, Fargo, ND. He also leaves good friends, neighbors and extended family, Keith Jacobson, West Fargo, ND; Phyllis Richter, Valley City, ND, Carol and Allen Siebert, Valley City, ND; Charles and Phyllis Petersen, Fargo, ND; Rhea and Earl Mills, Wichita, KS, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Wendell was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Marjorie; three brothers, Orvin, Telford and Norman; four sisters, Inez Tjon, Alma Grimestad, Kelma Birkeland and Lenore Tonneson.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 17. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel
251 Central Ave. S.
Valley City, ND

Service

FEB 18. 1:30 PM (CT)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
138 3rd St. NW
Valley City, ND

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Madam, I belong to Your aeridms for years. I like Your way of handling your dog in the ring and all the interesting moves You can perform with Your dog. Therefore I would like to address You with a proposal to give a Heelwork to Music workshop in the Czech republic this year, if you have few free days in Your calendar still. I would like to offer You several dates for a possible cooperation. 11th July “ 17th July or 19th July “ 25th July: we organize two camps in ChotĚboĚm, small town 100km from Prague. The lectures will be held on the carpet in a gym already used for the National Championship of Dogdancing twice. We would like to invite You for any one of there terms, the choice depends on Your available time. We can arrange traveling, meals and accommodation for You. If You decide to take Your dogs with You, we will be pleased. 18th July there is going to be a small Dogdancing competition; we would be honored, if You would like to join us as a judge or competitor. Since the 1st of March we have opened Dogstudio in Prague “ an area with 120m2 spaced ring, equipped for Dogdancing with mirrors, etc. We would like to held weekend-long workshops during the year and we would be pleased, if you accept an invitation to teach on any of the workshops. If you are interested, please send us few dates You would like to come, so we could choose one to invite You. The space and tools will be fully available for Your needs. I am looking forward for Your reply, Yours faithfully, Lada KrejĚove1###imported-begin###Neeraj###imported-end###

May 16, 2012 at 01:46 PM



“ He was a fine man and well remembered and appreciated.###imported-begin###Dick McConn###imported-end###

March 07, 2012 at 06:16 PM



“ I was so sorry to miss the funeral. Uncle Wendell was a special man and my Godfather. My thoughts and prayers continue to be with you, Douglas, Carolyn, and Curtis. It is never easy to lose a father. I still think of mine every day and still miss him very much.

Blessings to you,
Joanne##imported-begin##Joanne Drevlow##imported-end##

February 27, 2012 at 11:09 AM



“ To the family of Wendell Tjon, i started band in 6th grade with Mr. Tjon at Jefferson and played all through high school. Both he and Mrs. Tjon encouraged my musical career and were wonderful caring individuals. They were patient, caring and had a wonderful sense of humor. My thoughts are with you.##imported-begin##Lori Hanson Ritchey##imported-end##

February 26, 2012 at 04:37 PM



“ Hello Carolyn & Doug,

I just wanted to say that am so sorry to hear of your father's passing. It is a difficult experience, whatever age. My thoughts are with you all.

Take care,
Cheryl Dawdy##imported-begin##Cheryl Dawdy##imported-end##

February 20, 2012 at 11:48 AM



“ Altho I do not know any of the family members, I want to send condolences, anyway. How wonderful for you to have had him all these years.....I have many fond memories of times in chorus/choir. Mr. Tjon's leading us in "Halls of Ivy" and other songs during the All 50's reunions was always a big part of the festivities for me. My four years at VCHS and the friendships begun there have remained a very important part of my life.##imported-begin##Sue (Ryan) Tarpinian Class of '54##imported-end##

February 19, 2012 at 06:49 PM



“ Doug and family our thoughts and prayers are with you. Remember our family and friends live on in our hearts forever.##imported-begin##Mickey and Dre Fonder##imported-end##

February 18, 2012 at 01:00 PM



“ I would like to express my sympathies to Wendell's family and to also say that he taught me to play the violin, in his home, during the late 1980's and '90's. I was an adult student of Wendell's and my late husband, Dan, had an aviation business in VC at the time, we had 3 children and I decided to try and learn to play and also to "get out of the house" weekly for my own sanity! I thoroughly enjoined it and looked forward to that Thursday lesson immensely! Sometimes Marge would accompany us on the piano, it was so much fun and he also taught me alittle about backyard gardening. One Christmas he made and gave me a pail of homemade potato chips. I still play the piano but not so much the violin, he was always the better player! I think of Marge + Wendell often, wonderful people to have known and we all can feel the loss in our hearts and minds. My sympathies to all of their family members. Sincerely, Polly Lindemann-Pary Detroit Lakes. MN###imported-begin##Polly Lindemann-Pary###imported-end##

February 18, 2012 at 12:50 PM



“ Dear Family

You have my sincere sympathy on the passing of Mr. Tjon. I enjoyed very much my years in the VCHS band from '69-'75 with him as the director. I was always impressed on how he could incorporate the "modern" music along with the more traditional ones. He left a lasting legacy.

Tom Goven###imported-begin##Tom Goven###imported-end##

February 18, 2012 at 10:56 AM



“ Tjon Family, I was saddened to read of your fathers passing. Like everyone else who grew up in Valley City he was my band director. I remember when I was just beginning in band in grade school that the clarinet would be good for me due to my "fat fingers". He was not wrong! His soft spokeness and his oft used word "golly" spoke volumes. Whether I was in band or in choir at Our Savior's he always set the bar high and helped us all achieve it. My thought and prayers are with you all.##imported-begin##Sharon Nilles##imported-end##

February 17, 2012 at 08:53 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you go thru this most difficult time. Even though we know that Wendell is with God, it is just hard to no longer have our parents with us. Carolyn, Doug and Curtis, you know how much your Dad and your Mom meant to our family! Awesome neighbors and awesome friends! The Mills, Rhea Earl and Cadi##imported-begin##rhea and earl mills##imported-end##

February 17, 2012 at 03:09 PM



“ Curt,Doug & carlyn, my thoughts are with you bob##imported-begin##bob nestoss fargo nd##imported-end##

February 17, 2012 at 02:58 PM



“ Having taught with Wendel for many years, I knew him as a professional educator and talented musician. I sang in the Senior Choir at Our Savior's Lutheran Church under his direction and he produced outstanding choir concerts. As a professional educator, he influenced the lives of thousands of students and the family should be proud of his accomplishments. I am proud to have known him and worked with at VCHS.##imported-begin##Joseph A. Westby##imported-end##

February 17, 2012 at 12:05 PM



“ Mr. Tjon was truly a champion for education and arts for Valley City. Carolyn and family, may you feel and learn of the rich impact he had, over many decades, on students in our town as people reach out now to comfort you and share their fond remembrances. He left a legacy that's been multiplied many times over, through the love of music (and the positive outlook of encouragement) that he taught and fostered. He was truly exceptional in carrying out his call to teach and nurture.##imported-begin##Dick Danielson##imported-end##

February 17, 2012 at 08:00 AM



“ Mr. Tjon taught me to play the cornet ca 1946. I enjoyed the band and all the trips around the state to contests and his efforts to keep the smooching on the bus to a minimum. I still love and play the same cornet I used in all those years.##imported-begin##Don Layton##imported-end##

February 16, 2012 at 11:51 PM



“ God blessed us when he allowed us to be a part of this quiet and gentle family. Your Dad, like the rest of the Tjon siblings, was a giving and understanding man. A man of few words and a big heart. Wish I could be with you but will keep you all in my prayers today and the days ahead.

Cousin Margie##imported-begin##Margaret Tjon Pfeiffer##imported-end##

February 16, 2012 at 03:39 PM



“ Carolyn & families

I have great memories of your father going all the way back to 6th grade summer band. One of the highlights of high school was my chair falling backwards off the riser in the band room and putting a nice crack in my fiberglass sousaphone. Mr T wrapped a piece of duct tape (the handyman's friend) over it a few times and I was back in business the next day. How about the band trip up to Two Harbors MN. 69?? I somehow ended up in a river in the middle of the night learning how to net smelt. Each fall it was marching practice on the streets around the school and prepping for the big Homecoming show on Hanna field. I also recall him teaching me to play the B flat and F scales on an ancient string bass for the high school stage band. That turned into a 40-year gig for me. A great teacher and a great man, living forever in my memory.

“Has this world been so kind to you that you should leave with regret? There are better things ahead than any we leave behind.” - C.S. Lewis##imported-begin##Steve Sebelius##imported-end##

February 16, 2012 at 03:11 PM



“ I am truly sorry to hear about Wendell. He was a great man! My heart goes out to all of the family. The death of a father or mother is especially traumatic. My prayers will be with you.

Love & hugs,

Linda###imported-begin##Linda Hendrickson-Maack###imported-end##

February 16, 2012 at 08:44 AM



“ Dear Douglas, Carolyn, and Curtis:

We didn't know Wendell and Marge until we moved to the neighborhood in 1995. Right away we became good friends and neighbors. We always envied them as they worked in the yard and the garden, and we noticed they always helped one another and whatever they did; they did it together. They didn't seem old at all; they were so agile. When Marge died in 2005, Carol lost her best friend. After that we would go over and visit with Wendell, and he was always so well versed on any subject that came up. I (Allen) enjoyed my conversations with him a great deal.

We visited him a few times at Bethany, and I am sorry now that it couldn't have been more times than it was, but you can always look back a lot easier than looking ahead, but time always seem to run short when in Fargo.

Wnedell always looked forward to phone calls from his kids, especially Carolyn, who would call him each day, and we thought that was so special. He loved you all very much. I know you all will miss him. We will miss him too.

May God Bless His Memory###imported-begin##Allen & Carol Siebert###imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 11:32 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you Doug, and your family. I am so happy I had the chance to visit Wendell when in Fargo last October. Wendell was such a wonderful person and loving husband and father. He will be missed, but in your hearts forever. God bless and may your hearts be comforted. Galen and Judi###imported-begin##Judi Isaak###imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 10:29 PM



“ Although I wasn't in band, all my life Mr. Tjon, as we knew him, remained who I thought of when I heard a band playing. He was THE "Music Man," to me and will always be part of my memories of school days in Valley City. May God be with him and with Curt and the entire Tjon family. He made a significant contribution and provided a strong example of hard work and dedication to his profession during the formative years of many of us.###imported-begin##Larry & JoAnne Gauper###imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 09:53 PM



“ My saxophone still sits in a corner of my bedroom always bringing a smile and remembrances of all the good times associated with band and chorus at VCHS in the early 50's. We lived only a block from the Tjonn residence where I learned to play piano as well. Thank you Tjonn family for giving us the gift of music.
Jan Geisler Christie###imported-begin##Jan Geisler Christie###imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 05:39 PM



“ *Family:
I always enjoyed your Father. As stated he had much patience with his students. I played the coronet and really enjoyed his manner of teaching and conducting. My thought and prayer are with each and everyone of you during this time##imported-begin##Doug Peterson##imported-end##*

February 15, 2012 at 04:29 PM



“ *Curt, Doug and Caroline and families. May you all be a peace now that your Dad has joined your Mom and his brothers and sisters in a far better place.##imported-begin##Ron & Sue Tonneson##imported-end##*

February 15, 2012 at 01:12 PM



“ *My sympathy goes out to the Tjon familiy. I have wonderful memories of being in band. I played the coronet, so I was lucky to be in the section with all the guys who liked to have "fun" during band! He truly had a stern look that he would send iin our direction. I contiunied to play in the VCSU band and enjoyed my musical experiences. I am thankful I had these wonderful musical experiences.##imported-begin##Cheryl (Foss) Rowekam;p##imported-end##*

February 15, 2012 at 01:04 PM



“ To Mr Tjon's entire family,
My dear friend, Bonnie Cink informed me yesterday of he passing of Mr. Tjon.
Please accept my sincere condolences at the loss of this great man. He was responsible for instilling in me a love of music at a very early age. I was in percussion section the Jr. High and VCHS band and I remember how it irritated him when those of us playing snare drums would hit "rim shots" during various songs. He didn;t like that. But, being the kind and gentle man he was, he would just give us a stern look. Never a cross word. I lucky to have known him and been his student. God bless you all druing this time of adjustment. I will remember Mr. Tjon as a wonderful mentor, the consumate gentleman, and an inspiration.##imported-begin##Bryce Risser##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 12:55 PM



“ I learned to play coronet and was a part of the VCHS band under Mr. Tjon's direction in the early 1950's. He was a wonderful and patient teacher and I will always cherish those memories and good times. My sympathy to all his family.##imported-begin##Carol (Ott) Olson##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 12:03 PM



“ To the family...may you always know how special your dad was to so many people. It was long, long ago that I was one of the many that looked forward to that music period in the day. We all carry some of the passion for music that we saw and absorbed then.##imported-begin##Larry Danielson##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 11:46 AM



“ Dear Curt, Doug and Caroline and your families,
I was sorry to hear of your dad's death. Not for him because he is home. But for the grief you now face.
As we walked out the isle after Mom's funeral, the image of your father sitting in a wheelchair with tears rolling down his face will forever be in my memory. Only the baby of the family is left now. Remember in your sorrow that your Dad is home.##imported-begin##Lee & Lorna Pommrehn##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 11:34 AM



“ Carolyn and Family, your children should know how many lives this good man touched. His integrity and devotion are riches few can claim. Thinking of you. Gorman King##imported-begin##Gorman King##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 11:29 AM



“ I had Mr. Tjon as a music instructor in high school. I went on with my music and because of his caring ways I learned how great music can be. Here in Maryland I belong to a Senior choral group all because I was taught by a great instructor and person.##imported-begin##Maj. Karen Marx-Miller Ret.##imported-end##

February 15, 2012 at 11:16 AM



“ Thank you, Mr. Tjon, for your example of gentle strength and grace. You made me so welcome in your home and I only wish I could have sung in your church choir! Love to your family: your legacy and your joy!###imported-begin###Chris Sanders###imported-end###

February 15, 2012 at 10:59 AM



“ My heartfelt condolences go out to the family of Mr. Tjon, our inspirational, dedicated band director at Valley City High School for so many years. Music has had a huge influence in my life, and it all started with Mr. Tjon teaching me to play the clarinet and then the saxophone. My love of classical music began with playing the beautiful strains of Mozart and Beethoven at VCHS. The memories of our stately band uniforms and marching in the Valley City parades will always be precious ones to me, not to mention to fun of playing in the Pep Band for Hi-Liner athletic games. I took it one step further after graduation and moving to California by marrying a school band director! So thank you, Mr. Tjon, for the wonderful memories you provided to so many of your grateful high school students at VCHS. I feel certain that you'll be directing a choir of angels playing beautiful harp music in the great beyond!###imported-begin###Bonnie Cink Ness###imported-end###

February 14, 2012 at 05:36 PM



“ To the family my sympathy:

Curtis, you may remember me, I came to VC as a junion and a beginner in band but ended up being a band director myself and even taught a year with your dad when I was in St. Kates.

Your dad showed great patience with me! I am just one of, I am sure, many who went into music and I now have many, many of my own who pursued music as well. He legacy goes on!!!

Grover Peterson##imported-begin##Grover Peterson##imported-end##

February 14, 2012 at 04:41 PM